To the Right Reverend Father in God

HENRY

Lord Bishop of *LONDON*,

One of His MAJESTY's

Most Honourable PRIVY COUNCIL.

MY LORD,

YOUR Lordship having signified your pleasure that the Sermon *which you heard, when you did us the honour to be present at the Opening of our Parish Church, should be made publick; notwithstanding my averseness to print any thing in English, yet out of a just sense both of that Obedience which I owe to you as my Bishop, and of that Kindness which I have received from You as my Patron, I have now done it, and herewith make bold to present it to You. What Effect a Discourse of this Nature will have upon the Minds of those who shall have so much patience as to read it, I know not. But must leave that to him who hath the hearts of all men in his hand. My Subject I am sure is good and necessary: And as for my plain and practical way of handling it, it is that which my Text requireth, in that it commandeth that in our Christian Congregations,* All things be done to edifying. *So that unless I had endeavoured to suit it to the Capacities of all there present, and to make it as edifying as I could unto them, my Sermon had been a Contradiction to my Text: And besides that, I had lost my Design in Preaching it: Which was, to convince those especially, whose Souls, under your Lordship, are committed to my care and conduct,*

of the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of the Common Prayer, *and ſo to perſuade them to the conſtant and conſciencious uſe of it; not only becauſe it is conformable to the Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Practice of the Univerſal Church, nor only becauſe it is eſtabliſhed by the Laws both of our Church and State (though they alſo be very great Reaſons) but likewiſe becauſe of that extraordinary benefit and advantage which they would receive from it, for the edifying of their Souls in whatſoever is neceſſary to their Eternal Salvation.*

I am very ſenſible, that much more might have been ſaid upon this Excellent Subject. But intending no more than a plain Sermon upon the occaſion, I was forced to omit many things, and to confine my ſelf to ſuch only, which were moſt obvious, and ſeemed the moſt neceſſary for people to know and practice, in order to their being reconciled unto, and edified by our Publick Prayers. And if upon your peruſal of that little which I have ſaid, you ſhall find any thing not agreeable to the Doctrine of our Church, I humbly ſubmit it to Your Lordſhips Judgment and Cenſure; only deſiring that You would be as ready to pardon, as I am to retract it.

My Lord,

I have one requeſt more to make unto You, which is, that as You was the occaſion of my printing this Sermon, ſo You would be pleaſed to accept of it, now it is printed: And if, by the Bleſſing of Almighty God, it may contribute any thing to thoſe great Ends, which You continually proſecute with ſo great Wiſdom and Prudence, with ſuch exemplary Care and Diligence in the Management of that high Office which he hath called you to, even to the Glory of his great Name, the good of his Church, and the Salvation of the Souls of Men; it is all that is deſired by

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt humble
and moſt obedient Servant,

WILLIAM BEVERIDGE.

A

SERMON

Concerning the

Excellency and Uſefulneſs

OF THE

Common Prayer.

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1 *COR.* XIV. 26.

Let all things be done to edifying.

WHEN *Judas Maccabeus* had new built the Altar, and repaired the Temple at *Hieruſalem*, after it had been poſluted and laid waſte for Three years together, the Church of God at that time and place rejoyced ſo much at it, that they kept the Dedication of it Eight days, and ordered that the ſame ſhould be obſerved every year; 1 *Maccab.* 4. 59. And ſo we find it was in our Saviours time: for he himſelf was pleaſed to honour that

Feſtival, though only of Eccleſiaſtical Inſtitution, with his own preſence; *Joh.* 10. 22. In the like manner, we of this Pariſh have cauſe to be tranſported with joy and gladneſs, and to ſpend this day in praiſing and adoring the moſt high God, for that our Church, which hath lain waſte for above five times Three years, is now at laſt rebuilt and fitted again for his Worſhip and Service. For what the Altar and Temple were unto the Jews then, the ſame will our Church be unto us now. Did they there offer up their Sacrifices unto God as Types of the Death of Chriſt? We ſhall here commemorate the ſaid Death of Chriſt, typified by thoſe Sacrifices. Did they come from all parts of *Judea* to worſhip God there? So ſhall we, I hope, come from all parts of this pariſh to worſhip God here. Was the Temple an Houſe of Prayer to them? So is this Church to us. Was that the place where God according to his promiſe came unto his People to bleſs them? I do not doubt but he will do the ſame to us in this place, if we come unto it, and carry our ſelves in it as we ought to do. In ſhort, was the Temple the place where all things were performed that could any way conduce to the Edifying of Gods People, as things then ſtood? The ſame may be ſaid of our Church, as things now ſtand. For whatſoever is or can be neceſſary to the Edifying of our Souls here, and ſo to their Eternal Salvation hereafter, is clearly and fully comprehended in thoſe ſeveral Offices, which according to the Laws of the Land, are now to be performed in this Place. Neither is there any thing contained in any of them, but what doth really conduce to thoſe great Ends and Purpoſes.

But this being a thing which is denied by ſome, and underſtood but by few amongſt us, I ſhall endeavour to explain and demonſtrate unto all. Which I chuſe to do at this time, becauſe 'tis the moſt proper Subject I could think of for this occaſion. For unleſs what is to be now done in this place, will anſwer the ends wherefore it is erected,

erected, all the Coſts and Charges that have been laid out upon it, will be to no purpoſe at all. But if it can be fully made out, That the Service which is here to be performed, doth highly conduce to the Advancement of Gods Glory and your Happineſs, the great Ends wherefore ſuch Places are erected, then you cannot but acknowledge that whatſoever any of you have contributed towards it, is the beſt Money that you ever ſpent; and that this day wherein the ſaid Service is begun to be performed in it, is one of the moſt joyful days that this Pariſh ever ſaw.

This therefore is that which I ſhall endeavour to prove at this time: And for that end I have choſen theſe words for the ground and foundation of all that I ſhall ſay upon this Subject, *Let all things be done to Edifying.* For the right underſtanding whereof, we muſt know, that the Apoſtle having in this Chapter diſcourſed at large concerning the way and manner of holding Chriſtian Aſſemblies, and having proved that whatſoever is there ſaid ought to be ſpoken in ſuch a Language, that all there preſent may underſtand, and ſo be edified by it; he at laſt ſums up the whole in this Propoſition, *How is it then Brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a Pſalm, hath a Doctrine, hath a Tongue, hath a Revelation, hath an Interpretation. Let all things be done to Edifying*: As if he ſhould have ſaid, Whatſoever gifts any of you have or pretend to, yet when you meet together upon a Religious Account, for the publick Worſhip of God, take ſpecial care that all things be there done, to the Edifying of all who are there preſent. From whence it is plain that the Apoſtle lays down this as a general Rule, neceſſary to be obſerved in all Chriſtian Congregations. So that whenſoever we meet together to Worſhip and ſerve God, if any thing be there done which is not for our Edification, we come ſhort of this Rule; and ſo we do too, if any thing be there wanting

that may conduce to that end. For according to this Rule, as nothing is to be there done but what is for our Edifying, so also on the other side, all things that are or can be for our Edifying ought to be there done.

But for our beter understanding the true sense and purport of this Rule, it is necessary to consider what the Apostle here means by *edifying*? For which we must know, That all Christians being, as the same Apostle saith, *of the Houshold of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone*; Eph. 2. 19, 20. Hence whatsoever tends to the strengthening, supporting, cementing, or raising this Fabrick higher, whatsoever it is whereby men are made more firm and solid Christians, more holy and perfect men then they are before, by that they are said to be *edified*. And therefore it is a great mistake for men to think as many do, that they are *edified* by what they hear, meerly because they know perhaps some little thing which before they were ignorant of. For *Knowledge*, as the Apostle saith, *puffeth up*; it is *Charity that edifieth*; 2 Cor. 8. 1. And therefore whatsoever knowledge we attain to, we cannot be said to be *edified* by it, any further than as it influenceth our minds, excites our love, and inclines our heart to God and goodness. And that this is the true notion of *edifying*, is plain from the Apostles own words, where he saith, *Let no corrupt communication come out of your mouths, but that which is for the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers*; Eph. 4. 29. For from hence it is manifest, that that onely is properly said to *edifie*, that ministers grace unto us, whereby we are made more pure and holy than we were before. And therefore we read of *Edifying our selves in love*, Eph. 4. 16. and *building up our selves in our most holy faith*, Jude 20. which are the true graces that make up a real and true Christian. And nothing can be said to *edifie*, but what tends to the exciting and increasing of them:

them: *Until we come* (as the Apostle saith) *in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledg of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*; Eph. 4. 12, 13. Hence therefore, when the Apostle saith, *Let all things be done to edifying*, his meaning in brief is this, that in all our Christian Assemblies, When we meet together to worship and serve God, All things there are to be so done, that we may return home wiser and better than we came thither, with our knowledg of God and Christ increased, our desires enlarged, our love inflamed, our faith confirmed, all our graces quickened, and so our whole souls made more humble, more holy, more like to God, than they were before.

The words being thus briefly explained, I shall now apply them to our present purpose, and shew that that Form of Religious Worship, which is prescribed by our Church, established by the Laws of the Land, and therefore to be used now in this place, agrees exactly with this Rule or Canon of the holy Apostle, even that *all things in it are done to edifying*.

But before we prove that that Form in particular which our Church hath prescribed, agreeable to this Apostolical Rule, it is necessary to prove first, That the prescribing a Form in general is so. For unless the prescribing a Form in general be according to this Rule, no Form in particular that is prescribed can possibly agree with it. But now that this Rule admits, yea requires the prescribing of some Form, is evident from the Rule it self. For the Apostle here commands the Church of *Corinth*, and so all Provincial Churches, to take care that in their Religious Assemblies *all things be done to edifying*. But how is it possible for any Provincial Church to see that this be done except she prescribes some certain Form for the doing of it? If every Minister of a Parish should be left to his own liberty, to do what he pleased in his own Congregation, although some perhaps might be so wise and prudent as to

observe

obſerve this Rule, as well as they could, yet conſidering the Corruption of Humane Nature, we have much cauſe to fear that others would not. At leaſt the Church could be no way ſecured that all would; and therefore muſt needs be obliged to conſider of and appoint ſome ſuch Form to be uſed in all her Congregations, by which ſhe may be fully aſſured that this Apoſtolical Rule is every where obſerved, as it ought to be. And although we ſhould ſuppoſe what can never be expected, that all the Clergy in every Province ſhould be as wiſe and good as they ought to be, yet it cannot be ſuppoſed that every one of them ſhould underſtand what is for the Edification of the people as well as all together. And therefore it muſt needs be acknowledged that the ſureſt way to have this Rule obſerved, is, for the Governours of every Church, and the whole Clergy, to meet together by their Repreſentatives, in a Synod or Convocation, and there upon mature Deliberation agree upon ſome ſuch Form, which they in their Prudence and Conſciences judge to be according to this Rule, which the Apoſtle here lays down before them.

And beſides that the preſcribing a Form in general, is more for our *Edifying*, than to leave every one to do what ſeems good in his own Eyes, We have the concurrent Teſtimony, Experience and Practice of the Univerſal Church. For we never read or heard of any Church in the World from the Apoſtles days to ours, but what took this courſe. Though all have not uſed the ſame, yet no Church but hath uſed ſome Form or other. And therefore for any man to ſay, That it is not lawful, or not expedient, or not ſo edifying, to uſe a Form of Prayer in the publick Worſhip of God, is to contradict the general ſenſe of Chriſtianity, to condemn the Holy Catholick Church, and to make himſelf wiſer than all Chriſtians that ever were before him. Which, whatſoever it may be thought now, was always heretofore reckoned one of the greateſt ſins and follies that a Man could be guilty of.

Nay

Nay more than all this too: For this is not only to make a Mans ſelf wiſer than all Chriſtians, but wiſer than Chriſt himſelf: For it is impoſſible to preſcribe any Form of Prayer in more Plain and expreſs Terms than he hath done it, where he ſaith, *When ye Pray, ſay, Our Father which art in heaven*, &c. *Luke* 11. 2. And I hope none here preſent but will acknowledge that Chriſt, by whom alone we can be edified, knows better what is, or what is not for our edification, than we or all the Men in the World can do. And therefore ſeeing he hath not only preſcribed a Form of Prayer for his Diſciples to uſe, but hath expreſly commanded them to uſe it; we who profeſs our ſelves to be his Diſciples, ought to reſt fully ſatisfied in our minds, that uſing of a Form of Prayer, is not only lawful, but much more for our edifying, than it is poſſible for any other way of praying to be.

The ſame may be proved alſo from the nature of the thing it ſelf, by ſuch Arguments, which do not only demonſtrate that it is ſo, but likewiſe ſhew how it comes to be ſo. For, *Firſt*; In order to our being edified, ſo as to be made better and holier, whenſoever we meet together upon a Religious account, it is neceſſary that the ſame good and holy things be always inculcated and preſſed upon us after one and the ſame manner. For we cannot but all find by our own experience how difficult it is to faſten any thing that is truly good either upon our ſelves or others, and that it is rarely, if ever effected, without frequent repetitions of it. Whatſoever good things we hear only once, or now and then, though perhaps upon the hearing of them, they may ſwim for a while in our Brains, yet they ſeldom ſink down into our hearts, ſo as to move and ſway the affections, as it is neceſſary they ſhould do, in order to our being edified by them. Whereas by a Set Form of Publick Devotions rightly compoſed, as we are continually put in mind of all things neceſſary for us to know or do, ſo that is always

ways done by the same words and expressions, which by their constant use will imprint the things themselves so firmly in our minds, that it will be no easie matter to obliterate or race them out, but do what we can, they will still occur upon all occasions; which cannot but be very much for our Christian Edification.

Moreover, That which conduceth to the quickening our souls, and to the raising up of our affections in our Publick Devotions, must needs be acknwledged to conduce much to our Edification. But it is plain, that as to such purposes a set Form of Prayer is an extraordinary help to us; for if I hear another pray, and know not beforehand what he will say, I must first listen to what he will say next, then I am to consider whether what he saith be agreeable to Sound Doctrine, and whether it be proper and lawful for me to joyn with him in the Petitions he puts up to God Almighty; and if I think it is so, then I am to do it. But before I can well do that, he is got to another thing: By which means it is very difficult, if not morally impossible, to joyn with him in every thing so regularly as I ought to do. But by a set Form of Prayer all this trouble is prevented; for having the Form continually in my mind, being thorowly acquainted with it, fully aproving of every thing in it, I have nothing else to do whilst the words are sounding in mine ears, but to move my heart and affections suitably to them, to raise up my desires of those good things which are prayed for; to fix my mind wholly upon God, whilst I am praising of him, and so to employ, quicken, and lift up my whole soul in performing my Devotions to him. No man that hath been acustomed to a Set Form for any considerable time, but may easily find this to be true by his own experience: And by consequence, that this way of Praying is a greater help to us, than they can imagine that never made tryal of it.

To

To this may be alſo Added, That if we hear another praying a Prayer of his own private Compoſition or voluntary Effuſion, our Minds are wholly bound up and confined to his words and expreſſions, and to his Requeſts and Petitions, be they what they will: So that at the beſt we can but pray his Prayer. Whereas when we Pray by a Form preſcribed by the Church, we pray the Prayers of the whole Church we live in, which are common to the Miniſter and People, to our Selves, and to all the Members of the ſame Church: So that we have all the Devout and Pious Souls that are in it, concurring and joyning with us in them: Which cannot ſurely but be more effectual for the Edifying not only of our ſelves in particular, but of the Church in general, then any private Prayer can be.

Laſtly, in order to our being Edified by our Publick Devotions, as it is neceſſary that we know before-hand what we are to pray for, ſo it is neceſſary that we afterwards know what we have prayed for, when we have done; For I ſuppoſe you will all grant, that all the good and benefit we can receive from our Prayers, is to be ultimately reſolved into Gods gracious Hearing and Anſwering of them: Without which they will all come to nothing. But there are two things required to the obtaining an Anſwer of our Prayers: Firſt, That we ſincerely and earneſtly deſire ſuch good things at the Hands of God, to which, as I have ſhewn, a Set-Form of Prayer conduceth very much: And then Secondly, It is required alſo that we truſt and depend upon God for his granting of them, according to the Promiſes which he hath made unto us in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. And I verily believe that one great Reaſon why Men pray ſo often to no purpoſe, is, becauſe they do not take this courſe: But when they have done their Prayers, they have done with them, and concern themſelves no more about them, then as if they had never prayed at all. But how can we expect that

God ſhould Anſwer our Prayers, when we our ſelves do not mind whether he Anſwer them or no? Nor believe and truſt upon him for it? For certainly truſting on God, as it is one of the higheſt Acts of Religion that we can perform, ſo it is that which gives Life and Vigour, Vertue and Efficacy to our Prayers, without which we have no ground at all to expect they ſhould be Anſwered. For God having Promiſed to Anſwer our Prayers, except we truſt on him for his Performance of ſuch Promiſes, we loſe the benefit of them, and by conſequence our Prayers too. And therefore as ever we deſire that he ſhould grant us what we pray for, when we have *directed our Prayers to him*, we muſt ſtill *look up*, Pſal. 5. 3. expecting and hoping for the return of them.

Now as this is a thing of greater Conſequence, ſo a Set-Form of Prayer is a greater help to us in it, then it is commonly thought to be. For if we hear another utter a Prayer *ex tempore*, which he never ſaid, nor we heard before, nor ever ſhall do it again, it is much if he himſelf can remember the tenth part of what he ſaid; How much leſs can we that heard him do it? And if we cannot poſſibly remember what we prayed for, how is it poſſible for us to expect it at the Hands of God? Or to depend upon him for it? But now it is quite otherwiſe when we uſe a Set-Form of Prayer. For by this means when we have prayed, we can recollect our ſelves, look over our Prayers again, either in a Book, or in our Minds, where they are Imprinted; We can conſider diſtinctly what we have asked at the Hands of God, and ſo act our faith and confidence on him, for the granting every Petition we have put up unto him, according to the Promiſes which he hath made us to that purpoſe. And as this is the ſureſt way whereby to obtain what we pray for, it muſt needs be the moſt *Edifying* Way of praying that we can poſſibly uſe.

These things being duely weighed, I shall now take it for granted, That the using a Form in general in the Publick Worship of God is Agreeable to this Apostolical Rule, *Let all things be done to Edifying*; And so shall proceed to shew that that form in particular which our Church hath appointed to be used upon such Occasions, is so too. For which end it is not necessary that I should run through every particular word, phrase, or expression in the *Common Prayer*, much less that I should vindicate and defend it from every little exception, that Ignorance or Malice may make against something in it. For nothing ever yet was or can be said or written, but something or other may be said or written against it, either well or ill. But my business must be to prove, That the Form of Divine Service, contained in the Book of *Common Prayer*, which is now used in the Church of *England*, conduceth so much to the *Edifying* those that use it, that it agrees exactly to the Rule which the Apostle here prescribes in that case. And this I shall demonstrate from four Heads. 1. *From the Language.* 2. *From the Matter or Substance of it.* 3. *From the Method.* And 4. *From the Manner of Performing it.* For if it be *Edifying* in all these Respects, it must needs be acknowledged to be so in the whole. There being nothing in it but what may be reduced to some of these Heads.

First, therefore as to the *Language*, you all know that the whole Service is Performed in English, the Vulgar and Common Language of the Nation, which every one understands, and so may be *Edified* by it. And this indeed is the Ground and Foundation of all the benefit that we can possibly receive from our Publick Prayers. And therefore in the Church of *Rome*, the Common People are made uncapable of being *Edified* by the Prayers of the Church, in that they are all made in Latine, a Language which they do not understand. So that when they,

meet to worſhip God, there are ſeldom any in the Congregation that knows what is ſaid there, except the Prieſt that reads it; and oftentimes not he neither. By which means they have no ſuch thing really amongſt them as *Common Prayer*. Neither is it poſſible for the Common People to be ever edified by what is there ſaid or done, except they could be once convinced by it of the horrible abuſe which their Church puts upon them, in commanding all her Publick Devotions to be performed in an unknown Tongue, directly contrary not only to the Rule in my Text, but to the Deſign of this whole Chapter.

But bleſſed be God for it, it is not ſo with us. For ours is truly *Common Prayer*, for it is written and read in that Language which is *common* to all the Congregations in the Kingdom, and to every perſon in each Congregation. So that all the People of the Land, whatſoever rank or condition they are of, may joyn together in the uſe of every thing that is in it, and ſo be joyntly Edified by it: Eſpecially conſidering that it is not only all in Engliſh, but in common and plain Engliſh, ſuch as we uſe in our common diſcourſe with one another. There are no unuſual or abſolete words, no hard or uncouth Phraſes in it, but every thing is expreſſed as clearly and plainly as words can do it: ſo that the meaneſt perſon in the Congregation, that underſtands but his Mothers Tongue, may be Edified by it, as well as the greateſt Scholar.

But that which is chiefly to be conſidered in the Language of the *Common Prayer*, is, that it is not only *common* but *proper* too. Though the words there uſed be all but *common* words, yet they are ſo uſed that they *properly* expreſs the things that are deſigned by them. This I confeſs may ſeem to be no great matter at firſt ſight, yet it is that without which we might be ſubverted by that which was intended for our Edification. For Impropriety of Speech in matters of Religion, hath given occaſion to all or moſt of the Schiſms, Errors and Hereſies, that

that ever infested this or any other Church; as might easily be demonstrated. Hence the Apostle gave *Timothy A Form of sound words*, and charged him to hold it fast, *Hold fast*, saith he, *the Form of sound words which thou hast heard of me*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. As knowing that except the words whereby he usually expressed Divine Truths, were sound and proper, it would be impossible for his Notions and Opinions of the things themselves to be so. And certainly if ever there was *A Form of Sound Words*, composed by men since the Apostles times, our *Common Prayer* may justly deserve that Title. It being all made up of such fit and proper, such sound and wholesome words, that if we do but hold fast to them, there is no fear of our falling either into Heresy or Schisme. For they, being duly considered, will suggest to our minds right and true Apprehensions of all the Articles of our Christian Religion; and so not only make us sound, but build us up strong and firm in our most holy Faith. So that considering the plainness and perspicuity, the soundness and propriety of Speech which is used in it, the least that can be said of the *Common Prayer*, is that all things in it are so worded, as is most for the *edifying* of all those that use it.

And as the words in the *Common Prayer* are all as edifying as words can be, so, in the Second place, Is the *Matter* expressed by those words. For there is nothing in it, but what is necessary for our Edification, and all things that are or can be for our Edification are plainly in it. First, I say there is nothing in our Liturgy but what is necessary for our Edification. There are no such *Fables* in it, or *endless Genealogies*, which, as the Apostle saith, *Minister questions, rather than Godly Edifying, which is in faith*, 1 Tim. 1. 4. There are none of those vain Disputations and impertinent Controversies, which have of late been raised in the Church, to its great disturbance

ſturbance, rather then its edification. There are no New Opinions, nor Airy Speculations in it, which ſerve only to tickle Mens ears and pleaſe their fancies, and ſo divert their thoughts from what they are about. Look it all over without prejudice and partiality, conſider ſeriouſly every thing that is in it, and you will find nothing aſſerted but what is conſonant to Gods Word, nothing prayed for but according to his Promiſe, nothing required as a duty, but what is agreeable to his Commands; nothing ſaid or done, but what is grave and ſober, ſolemn and ſubſtantial; nothing but what becomes the Worſhip of our Great and Almighty Creator. And therefore nothing but what we may be ſome way or other edified by.

And as there is nothing in it, but what is Edifying, ſo all things that are or can be Edifying are in it. For nothing can be neceſſary to *Ediſie* and make us ſolid and perfect Chriſtians elſe, but what is neceſſary either to be *believed* or *done*, or *obtained* by us. But there is nothing neceſſary to be *known* or *believed*, but we are taught it; nothing neceſſary to be *done*, but we are enjoyned it; nothing neceſſary to be *obtained*, but we pray for it in our Publick Form of Divine Service.

For firſt, As to thoſe things which are neceſſary to be *known or believed*, it is acknowledged by all Proteſtants that they are fully contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, which make a great, if not the greateſt part of our Divine Service; and are conſtantly read over, the Pſalms once every Month, the Old Teſtament once, and the New thrice every Year. And all the Fundamental Articles of our Chriſtian Faith, revealed in the Holy Scriptures, being briefly ſummed up in the *Apoſtles Creed*, that we may be ſure to keep them always in our Mindes, we have that Creed read and repeated, always once, and moſt commonly twice every day in the year. And ſeeing the Godhead of our Bleſſed Saviour, the Foundation of our whole Religion, hath been, and ſtill is denied by ſome, leſt

we should be led away with the Error of the Wicked, every Sunday and Holyday we reade the *Nicene Creed*, wherein the God-head both of the Son and Holy Ghost is asserted and explained. And that we may not entertain any Erroneous Opinions concerning the most Holy Trinity, or the Incarnation of the Son of God, but keep the true Catholick Faith whole and undefiled, upon certain days every year we read that which is commonly called the *Creed of St. Athanasius*, wherein those great Mysteries are unfolded in the most proper and perspicuous terms that they are capable of.

And as all things necessary to be believed are summarily contained in the *Three Creeds*, so they are frequently explained in the other parts of our Liturgy: In so much that it would be easie to frame a compleat Body of Divinity out of the words there used: At least of all such things as are needful for any Man in the World to believe or know, in order to his Eternal Salvation.

The same may be said also of all those things, which we ought to do. For as we here do whatsoever is necessary to be done in order to our Worshipping of God in this place, so we are here taught whatsoever is necessary to be learnt in order to our serving God in all other places. So that no Man that frequents our publick Congregations, where the *Common Prayer* is used, can ever plead Ignorance of any one duty whatsoever: For if it be not his own fault, he may there be instructed in every thing which he that made him requires of him. For here, as I observed before, we constantly reade the Holy Scripture, which, as the Apostle saith, *Is Profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly instructed unto all good Works*, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. And seeing it hath pleased the most High God to Comprise his whole Will, and by consequence our duty, in the *Ten Commandments*, hence we reade them constantly every Sun-

day

day and Holy-day throughout the whole year. By which means every one that doth not wilfully ſhut his Eyes may clearly ſee and fully underſtand his whole duty both to God and Man. Eſpecially conſidering that in the Prayers themſelves alſo there is frequent mention made of all thoſe Vices which ought to be avoided, and of all thoſe Good Works which ought to be performed by us. So that we can never come to Church, but we are ſtill put in mind, both of *what we ought*, and *what we ought not* to do, that we may be ſaved.

And then as there is nothing neceſſary to be *known* or *done*, but we are taught it; ſo neither is there any thing neceſſary to be *obtained* to make us either holy or happy, but we pray for it in the *Common Prayer*. For here we have the *Lords Prayer*, a Prayer compoſed by Wiſdom it ſelf; and therefore it muſt needs be the moſt perfect and divine Prayer that was ever made. Neither do we uſe it only once, but in every diſtinct Service of the Church, in our Prayers before we reade the Holy Scriptures: And in our Prayers after: Towards the end of the Litany, and in the beginning of the Communion Service, and in every Office of the Church beſides. And the reaſon is, becauſe although our Saviour hath not forbidden us to uſe any other Prayers, yet he hath expreſly commanded us to ſay this, whenſoever we pray. And therefore in obedience to his Command, our Church hath wiſely ordered, That in all and every Solemn Addreſs that we make to the moſt high God; we always ſay this Prayer, leaſt otherwiſe by our tranſgreſſion of his Command, in omitting this, we make all our other Prayers to be ineffectual. And beſides, by the conſtant uſe of this amongſt our other Prayers, we are always ſure to uſe one Prayer, both abſolutely perfect in its ſelf, and moſt acceptable unto him, to whom we pray, it being a Prayer of his own Compoſure: So that we ſpeak unto God in his own words, and ſo may be confident that we ask nothing of him, but exactly according to his own Will.

And

And though all things neceſſary for us, be vertually contained in the Lords Prayer, yet our Church in Conformity to the Catholick and Apoſtolical, hath thought good to add ſome other Prayers in which the ſame things are more particularly expreſſed and deſired at the Hands of our great and moſt Bountiful Benefactor. All which are ſo contrived, that there is nothing evil or hurtful for us, but we pray againſt it; nothing good or uſeful, but we pray for it. There is no Vice or Luſt, but we deſire it may be ſubdued under us; no Grace or Vertue, but we pray it may be planted and grow in us. In ſo much that if we do but conſtantly and ſincerely pray over all thoſe Prayers, and ſtedfaſtly believe and truſt in God for his Anſwering of them, and ſo obtain what we there pray for, we cannot but be as real and true Saints, as happy and bleſſed Creatures, as it is poſſible for us to be in this World. Neither do we here pray for our ſelves only, but according to the Apoſtles Advice, we make *Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions,* and *giving of Thanks for all Men*; yea, *for our very Enemies*, as our Saviour hath commanded us, *Mat.* 5. 44. And what can be deſired more than all this, to make the Matter of the *Common Prayer* Edifying either to our ſelves or others? Nothing certainly but truth and ſincerity of Heart in the uſing of it.

I cannot paſs from this Head, before I have obſerved one thing more unto you, concerning the Prayers in general, and that is, That they are not carried on in one continued Diſcourſe, but divided into many ſhort Prayers or Collects, ſuch as that is which our Lord himſelf Compoſed; and that might be one Reaſon, wherefore our Church ſo ordered it, that ſo ſhe might follow our Lords Example in it, who beſt knew what kind of Prayers were fitteſt for us to uſe. And indeed we cannot but all find by our own experience, how difficult it is to keep our Minds long intent upon any thing, much more upon

ſo great things as the object and ſubjects of our Prayers are; but do what we can we are ſtill liable to diſtractions: So that there is a kind of neceſſity to break off ſometimes, to give our ſelves a breathing time, that our thoughts being looſned for a while, they may with more eaſe, and leſs danger of diſtraction, be tyed up again, as it is neceſſary they ſhould be all the while that we are actually Praying to the Supream Being of the World.

Beſides that, in order to the Performing our Devotions aright to the moſt High God; it is neceſſary that our Souls be poſſeſſed all along with due apprehenſions of his greatneſs and glory. To which purpoſe our ſhort Prayers contribute very much: for every one of them beginning with ſome of the Properties or Perfections of God, and ſo ſuggeſting to our Minds right apprehenſions of him at firſt, it is eaſie to preſerve them in our Minds during the ſpace of a ſhort Prayer, which in a long one would be apt to ſcatter and vaniſh away.

But that which I look upon as one of the principal Reaſons, why our publick Devotions are and ſhould be divided into ſhort Collects, is this, Our Bleſſed Saviour, we know, hath often told us, That whatſoever we ask in his Name, we ſhall receive: And ſo hath directed us in all our Prayers to make uſe of his Name, and to ask nothing but upon the account of his Merit and Mediation for us: upon which all our hopes and expectations from God do wholly and ſolely depend. Hence therefore (as it always was, ſo) it cannot but be judged neceſſary, that the Name of Chriſt be frequently inſerted in our Prayers, that ſo we may lift up our hearts unto him, and Act our Faith upon him for our obtaining the good things we pray for. And ſo we ſee it is in the *Common Prayer*, for whatſoever it is we Ask of God, we preſently add, *Through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, or ſomething to that purpoſe. And ſo Ask nothing but according to our Lords Direction, even in his Name. And this is the reaſon that makes our Prayers ſo

ſhort;

ſhort; for take away the Concluſion of every Collect or Prayer, *In the Name of Chriſt*, and you may joyn them all together, and make them but as one continued Prayer. But this would be to offer manifeſt violence to the Prayers, by taking away that which gives them all their force and energy, and ſo making them ineffectual to the purpoſes for which they are uſed. For certainly the Asking all things in the Name of Chriſt, as we do in the *Common Prayer*, is the only way whereby to obtain what we deſire, and by conſequence the moſt *Edifying Way* of Praying in the World.

The next thing to be conſidered in the *Common Prayer*, is the *Method*, which is admirable, and as *Edifying*, if poſſible, as the *Matter* it ſelf. This none can deny that doth but fully underſtand, and ſeriouſly conſider of it. Which therefore that you may all do, I ſhall briefly run through the whole, and give you what light I can into it, that you may clearly ſee not only the Reaſonableneſs but the Excellency of it all along. For which purpoſe I ſhall inſtance only in ſuch things which offer themſelves at firſt ſight, to any one that doth but caſt his Eye upon it.

Let us therefore ſuppoſe a Congregation of ſober and devout Chriſtians, ſuch as we all ſhould be, met together to perform their Publick Devotions to Almighty God; every one of which hath lift up his heart privately unto him already, imploring his Aid and Aſſiſtance in the Performance of ſo great a Work, and ſo are all now ready to ſet about it. The firſt thing we do, is to read ſome *Sentences* of Holy Scripture, that ſo we may begin our Devotions unto God in his own words. And they are all ſuch *Sentences* as put us in mind of our ſins againſt him, and of his Promiſe to pardon them if we do repent: That ſo we may preſent and carry our ſelves with that Reverence and Godly Fear before him, as becometh thoſe

who are ſenſible of their own vileneſs and unworthineſs to approach ſo great a Majeſty; And likewiſe with that Faith and humble Confidence, which becometh thoſe who believe that he upon our Repentance will pardon our ſins, and accept both our Perſons and Performances, according to the Promiſes which he hath made unto us.

Then follows a grave *Exhortation*, concerning the End of our preſent Aſſembling which is of great uſe, and ought never to be omitted. For Men generally are apt to ruſh into the Preſence of God, without ever conſidering what they go about. Whereas this *Exhortation* puts us upon conſidering the greatneſs of the Work which we are now engaged in, and ſo upon compoſing our thoughts and preparing our ſelves for the due performance of it.

Our Minds being thus brought into a right frame and temper for it, we all, both Miniſter and People, proſtrate our ſelves before the moſt High God, *confeſſing* upon our Knees the manifold ſins and wickedneſs that we have committed againſt him. Which *Confeſſion* is ſo contrived, that all and every Perſon in any Congregation whatſoever may joyn in it. For it runs in general terms. And yet ſo too, that every particular Perſon may and ought in his own Mind to confeſs and acknowledge his own ſins, which he knows himſelf to be guilty of. As where we ſay, *We have left undone thoſe things which we ought to have done, and we have done thoſe things which we ought not to have done.* At the ſaying of this, every one ſhould call his own ſins to remembrance, what Duties he knows himſelf to have omitted, and what Vices he knows himſelf to have committed, and confeſs them accordingly unto God, and when we have thus confeſſed our ſins to God, we preſently implore his Mercy in the pardon of them, and his Grace, that for the future we may forſake them.

And whilſt we are thus upon our Knees, humbly con-

ſeſſing

feſſing and bewailing our ſins before the Lord our God, the Miniſter ſtands up, and in the Name of God, declares and pronounceth to all thoſe who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his Goſpel, *The Abſolution and Remiſſion of all their ſins.* Which though ſpoken alſo in general terms, yet every particular perſon there preſent, ought to apply it to himſelf, ſo as to be fully perſwaded in his own mind, that if he doth but ſincerely repent and believe the Goſpel, he is perfectly abſolved from all his ſins by God himſelf, according to the Promiſes which he hath made to Mankind in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

And now looking upon our ſelves as *abſolved* from our ſins, upon our Repentance and Faith in Chriſt, and by conſequence as reconciled to God, we take the boldneſs to call him Father, humbly addreſſing our ſelves to him in that Divine Form of Prayer which he himſelf hath given us. Which done, we lift up our hearts and voices unto God, for his Aſſiſtance of us in what we do, in the words of *David*, the Miniſter crying out, *O Lord open thou our Lips*, and the People anſwering, *And our Mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy Praiſe.* The Miniſter again, *O God make ſpeed to ſave us*, the People, *O Lord make haſte to help us.* And then immediately we all lift up our Bodies too, ſtand upon our Feet, and ſo put our ſelves into a poſture of Praiſing and Magnifying the Eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, for his infinite Goodneſs and Mercy towards us, for which purpoſe the Miniſter firſt ſaith or ſings the *Gloria Patri*, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt*, and the People to ſhew their Conſent, anſwer, *As it was in the Beginning, is now, and ever ſhall be, world without end.* Amen. But not thinking this to be enough, the Miniſter calls upon the People again, ſaying, *Praiſe ye the Lord*, and the People anſwer, *The Lords Name be Praiſed*, and then we go on to praiſe him together, ſaying,

ing or ſinging the 95. Pſalme, *Venite exultemus Domino, O come let us ſing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoyce in the ſtrength of our Salvation*, &c. and ſo proceed to the Pſalms appointed for the day. After every one of which, to teſtifie our belief in the moſt Sacred Trinity, and our acknowledgment of that infinite Love and Goodneſs, which every one of thoſe Divine Perſons hath manifeſted to us, we repeat that incomparable Hymn, *Glory be to the Father*, &c.

Our Hearts being thus Raiſed up to God in Praiſing and Admiring of him, we are now in a fit temper and diſpoſition to hear what he ſhall ſpeak unto us. And therefore have a Chapter read out of the *Old Teſtament*; and that in its ordinary courſe, except upon Sundays and Holydays, when more People attending the Publick Worſhip of God than can conveniently come upon other days, we read ſome Select Chapter proper for the day, and ſuch as is judged moſt edifying to all that are there preſent. And having thus heard God ſpeaking unto us in his holy Word, we preſently fall upon praiſing of him again, for ſo unſpeakable a mercy, ſaying, or ſinging, in the Morning, the *Te Deum*, one of the moſt Heavenly and Seraphick Hymns that was ever Compoſed by Men; Or elſe the *Song of the Three Children*, which is nothing but a Paraphraſe upon that which *David* ſang ſo often upon Earth, and which the Holy Angels ſing continually in Heaven, even *Hallelujah, Praiſe ye the Lord*. Wherein we being all ſenſible how far ſhort we our ſelves come of Praiſing God ſufficiently, we call upon all the Creatures in the World to do it, *Bleſs ye the Lord, praiſe him and magnifie him for ever*. In the Afternoon we ſing either the *Magnificat*, or elſe the 98. *Pſalm*, both which being taken out of Gods own Word, cannot but be very pleaſing and acceptable unto him.

After this our Souls being got upon the Wing again, and ſoaring aloft in the Contemplation of the Divine Perfections, we are now rightly qualified to hear and receive the

the Sublime Myſteries of the Goſpel. And therefore have a Chapter read to us out of the *New Teſtament*. After which we being revived with the good Tydings of the Goſpel, and filled with admiration at the infinite Goodneſs of God therein revealed to us, we break forth again in Praiſing and Adoring of him, in the Song of *Zacharias*, or elſe the 100 *Pſalm* in the Morning, and at Evening, either the 67 *Pſalm*, or elſe the Song of Old *Simeon*, ſtill Concluding with the *Gloria Patri*.

Now having thus heard ſome part of the Word of God read to us and expreſſed our thankfulneſs unto him for it, to ſignifie our Aſſent, not only to what we have heard, but to the whole Scripture, we all with one Heart and Voice Repeat the *Apoſtles Creed*, wherein the Sum and Subſtance of it is contained. And ſo profeſs our ſelves to continue in the Number of Chriſts Diſciples, and that as we were at firſt Baptized, ſo we ſtill believe in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, God Bleſſed for evermore.

Hitherto we have been moſtly taken up with Confeſſing our ſins to God, imploring his Mercy in the Pardon of them, hearing his moſt Holy Word, acknowledging his Goodneſs to us, and praiſing and magnifying his Name for it. By which means, except we have been extreamly wanting to our ſelves, our Hearts cannot but be ſo united and fixed upon God, that we are now rightly diſpoſed to make known our Wants and preſent our Petitions before him. This therefore is the next thing we ſet upon. But ſeeing that neither Miniſter nor People can poſſibly do it aright without the Aſſiſtance of God himſelf, therefore each of them firſt pray for his ſpecial Preſence with the other. The one ſaying, *The Lord be with you*, the other, *And with thy Spirit*. And then immediately falling down upon our Knees, we adore and ſupplicate each Perſon of the moſt Bleſſed Trinity to have mercy upon

upon us, *Lord have mercy upon us, Chriſt have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.* After which we Addreſs our ſelves to God in the words that he hath put into our Mouths, ſaying the *Lords Prayer*, which ended, the Miniſter and People by turns lift up their Hearts to God in ſome ſhort and heavenly Ejaculations, ſtriving as it were to outvy each other in prevailing with the Almighty to pour down his Bleſſings upon us. And then in an humble and ſolemn manner we joyn together in ſupplicating his Divine Majeſty for his Grace and Favour, his Defence and Protection, his Mercy and Bleſſing for our ſelves, for the King, for the Royal Family, for his Church, and for all Mankind. And this we do ordinarily in the Collects appointed for that purpoſe. But upon Wedneſdays and Fridays, (upon which days the Primitive Church uſed to perform more than their ordinary Devotions) as alſo upon the Lords day in the Morning, we do it in the *Litany*, and in ſuch a *Litany* as comprehends all and every thing that we can ever need to deſire of Almighty God, either for our ſelves or others.

After this upon Sundays and Holydays we proceed to the *Communion Service*: And therefore approaching to the Lords Table, we begin it with his own Prayer. And after another ſhort Prayer to God to cleanſe the thoughts of our Heart by the Inſpiration of his Holy Spirit, we read the *Ten Commandments*, which he hath enjoyned us to obſerve; and after every Commandment we ask God Mercy for our Tranſgreſſions thereof for the time paſt, and grace to keep the ſame for the time to come; ſaying, *Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.* And then after a Prayer for the King, and the Collect for the day, we read the *Epiſtle* and *Goſpel*, that is, moſt commonly a ſhort Paragraph taken out of the Canonical Epiſtles, and another out of one of the Holy Goſpels, which was the Ancient Way of Reading the Scripture, before it was divided into Chapters.

And

And we do it now to prepare us the better for the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, therein revealed to us. But seeing we neither do nor can read over the whole, we repeat the substance of it in the *Nicene Creed*, which it is very necessary we should do at this time, that so we may demonstrate our selves to be Christians, and so capable of receiving the most holy Communion.

He that all this while hath employed himself as he ought to do in the service of our Church, cannot but find himself strangely edified by it. Yet howsoever, that nothing may be wanting that may any way conduce to our edification, after the *Nicene Creed*, our Church hath appointed a *Sermon* to be preached, which if sound, plain, and practical, as it ought to be, cannot but be very edifying too.

And now we may be well supposed to be so far edified, as to be raised up to the highest pitch of Devotion that we can arrive at in this World, and so are fit to be admitted to the highest Ordinance of the Church, the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. And therefore we now betake our selves to it. But that we may not appear before our Lord empty, we first offer up something to him of what he hath bestowed upon us, to be disposed of to pious and charitable uses; testifying thereby our acknowledgment of his goodness to us, and that we have nothing but what we receive from him. And to excite and encourage us to do this, all the while that we are offering, we have some select sentences of Scripture read to us, wherein God either commands us to be charitable, or else promiseth a blessing to those that are so. And then we pray *for Christs whole Church Militant here on earth*, whereby we profess our selves to be real Members of it, and desirous to hold communion with it in Christs Mystical Body and Blood. And so we proceed to the Celebration of it: in which the *Method* is so clear, so apparently

edifying, that I need not say any thing of it. But shall only observe two things in general concerning it.

First, That the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, being the highest Mystery in all our Religion, as representing the death of the Son of God to us, hence that place where this Sacrament is Administered, was always made and reputed the highest place in the Church. And therefore also it was wont to be seperated from the rest of the Church by a Skreen or Partition of Network in Latine *Cancelli*, and that so generally, that from thence the place its self is called the *Chancell.* That this was anciently observed in the building of all considerable Churches (for I speak not of private Oratories or Chappels) within few Centuries after the Apostles themselves, even in the days of *Constantine* the Great, as well as in all Ages since, I could easily demonstrate from the Records of those times. But having purposely waved Antiquity hitherto, I am loath to trouble you with it now. But I mention it at present, only because some perhaps may wonder why this should be observed in our Church, rather then in all the other Churches which have been lately built in this City. Whereas they should rather wonder why it was not observed in all other as well as this. For besides our Obligations to conform as much as may be to the practice of of the Universal Church, and to avoid novelty and singularity in all things relating to the Worship of God; it cannot be easily imagined that the Catholick Church in all Ages and places for 13 or 1400 years together, should observe such a Custom as this, except there were great reasons for it.

What they were, it is not necessary for us to enquire now. It may be sufficient to observe at present that the Chancel in our Christian Churches, was always looked upon as answering to the Holy of Holies in the Temple, which, you know, was separated from the Sanctuary or Body of the Temple, by the Command of God himself.

And

And that this place being appropriated to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, it ought to be ſo contrived, as may be moſt convenient for thoſe who are to partake of that Bleſſed Ordinance. But it muſt needs be more convenient for thoſe who are to enjoy Communion with Chriſt, and in him with one another, in this holy Sacrament, to meet together, as one body, in one place ſeperated for that purpoſe, than to be diſperſed, as otherwiſe they would be; ſome in one and ſome in another part of the Church. Or in ſhort, it is much better for the place to be ſeparate, than the people.

Furthermore, It is not only convenient, but in ſome ſenſe neceſſary, for every Communicant to obſerve and take ſpecial notice of the ſeveral Circumſtances which our Lord hath ordained to be uſed in this Sacrament, as the Breaking of the Bread, and the Conſecrating both that and the Wine, to repreſent his Death, the breaking of his Body, and the ſhedding of his Blood for our ſins; that ſo our hearts may be the more affected with it, and by conſequence our ſouls more edified by it. But this cannot be ſo well done, except there be a place ſet apart for it, where they may all be placed, about or near to the Communion Table, and ſo behold what is there done at the Conſecration of the Elements. Hence alſo it is, that the Seats there are and ought to be ſo ordered, that all that are in them may ſtill look that way, and contemplate upon their Bleſſed Saviour, there evidently ſet forth as Crucified for them.

The other thing that I would obſerve unto you concerning the Holy Communion, is this, that our Church requireth, or at leaſt ſuppoſeth it to be Adminiſtered every Lords-day, and every Holy day throughout the year, as it was in the Primitive Church. For that is the reaſon that the *Common Service* is appointed to be uſed upon all ſuch days, and to be read at the Communion Table, that ſo the Miniſter may be there ready to Adminiſter it

unto all that desire to partake of it: Which shews the great care that our Church hath of all her Members, that they might be edified and confirmed in the Faith. To which nothing contributes more then frequent Communion at our Lords Table. Which if People could once be perswaded to, they would soon find greater benefit by it, then I can express, or they themselves, till then, imagine. I shall say no more of it at present, but only this, That I am so sensible of what I now say, that could I be sure to have a sufficient number of Communicants, I should be heartily glad to Administer this Holy Sacrament every Lords day, both for their sakes, and my own too.

Thus I have given you a short Scheme of that excellent Method wherein our Divine Service is performed: which whosoever rightly considers, will need no other Argument to convince him, that it is according to the Apostles Rule, very *Edifying* indeed. The last thing to be considered in it, is the *Manner of its Performance*; by which I mean only the several postures of the Body, as *standing*, and *kneeling*, which are used in it; for they also are done to *edifying*.

While we say or sing the Hymns and Psalms to the Praise and Glory of God, we *stand up*, not only to signifie, but to excite the Elevation of our minds at that time. For as on the one hand, if our Souls be really lift up in the praises of God, our Bodies will naturally lift up themselves to accompany them, as far as they can towards Heaven; so on the other hand, the raising up of our bodies helps towards the raising up of our Souls too, by putting us in mind of that high and heavenly work we are now about, wherein according to our weak Capacities, we joyn with the Quire of Heaven in praising God now, as we hope to do it for evermore. For this cause also we *stand* at the *Creeds*, for they being Confessi-

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ons of our Faith in God, as ſuch, they come under the proper Notion of Hymns or Songs of praiſe to him. All our praiſing God being really nothing elſe but our Confeſſing and acknowledging him to be what he is in himſelf and to us. And beſides that, by our *ſtanding* both at the *Creeds* and *Goſpels*, we ſignifie our aſſent unto them, and our readineſs to defend them, to the utmoſt of our power againſt all oppoſition whatſoever. And as for the *Goſpels* particularly, they contain the very Acts which our Lord did, and the very Words which he ſpake when he was upon Earth; and therefore we who profeſs him to be our Lord and Maſter, cannot ſurely but *ſtand up*, when we hear him ſpeaking, and liſten diligently to thoſe gracious words which proceeded out of his Divine Mouth.

And as when we praiſe God, we raiſe up our ſelves as high as we can towards Heaven, ſo when we pray unto him, we fall down as low as we can towards the Earth, not daring to preſent our ſupplications to the abſolute Monarch of the whole World, any other ways then *upon our knees.* Which is ſo proper, ſo natural a poſture of Supplicants, that if all men would but duly conſider what they do when they pray to Almighty God, the Church need never have commanded them to *kneel* at that time. For they could not chuſe but do it: No, not although the place where they are ſhould ſeem never ſo inconvenient for it. For we find our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf *kneeling* at his Prayer in the Garden, upon the bare ground, *Luke* 22. 41. and St. *Paul* upon the Sea-ſhore, where he could have no other Cuſhion but Stones or Sand, *Acts* 21. 5. However, To take off all thoſe little excuſes that men are apt to make for themſelves in this caſe, the Seats in this Church are ſo diſpoſed, and all things ſo prepared in them, that there can be no inconvenience at all in it, but rather all the conveniences for *kneeling* that can be deſired. And therefore if any of you ſhall yet neglect to *kneel*, while the Prayers are read, they will give us too much cauſe

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to all their Religion into queſtion, or to ſuſpect they have none at all, For if they had, they durſt not, they could not offer ſuch a manifeſt affront to the great Creator of the World, as to carry themſelves no otherwiſe while they pray to him, than as if they were converſing with their fellow Creatures. But why do I ſpeak of their praying unto God? It is too much to be feared they do not pray at all, nor come to Church for any better purpoſe then only to ſee and be ſeen. I am ſure they perform no Act of External Worſhip or Adoration unto God, nor ſhew him that reſpect and reverence which is due unto him; and ſo give very great offence to all pious and devout Chriſtians.

Whereas if all and every perſon in the Congregation, would always be upon their *knees*, while they put up their petitions to the moſt high God, what a mighty advantage would this be, not only to every one in particular, but to the whole Congregation in general? For as every one would by this means keep his heart more ſtedfaſt in the true fear and dread of God, and likewiſe more certainly obtain the good things he prays for, as the Fathers frequently aſſert: ſo the whole Congregation alſo, would be very much *edified* by it. For by this means we ſhould excite and inflame each others Devotions, confirm and ſtrengthen one anothers Faith, and convince both our ſelves and all that ſee us, that Religion is indeed a ſerious thing; and that we believe it to be ſo, by our ſerving God with ſo much *reverence and godly fear*, as this humble poſture repreſenteth. And therefore as you tender the love of God, the credit of Religion, or the ſalvation of your own ſouls, I beſeech you all in the name of him that made you, that whenſoever you come hither to pray unto him, you do it in that awful, lowly, and ſolemn manner, which our Chuch commandeth, and as becometh creatures, when you ſpeak to your great and almighty Creator; that ſo you may give true Worſhip and honour

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unto him, and also receive that benefit and edification of your selves, which he hath promised and you expect from your Publick Prayers. This being certainly the most Edifying posture that you can possibly use upon such occasions.

From what we have hitherto discourst concerning the *Language*, the *Matter*, the *Method*, and the *Manner of Performing* Divine Service, as contained and prescribed in the Book of *Common Prayer*, we may positively conclude that it agrees exactly with the Rule in my Text, even that, *All things in it are done to edifying*: Which was the thing I undertook to prove. I know that many other Arguments might be brought to shew the Excellency and Usefulness of the *Common Prayer*. But these already produced are sufficient to convince any sober and considering Christian of it. And if there be any here present who are not yet convinced by what they have heard of it, I desire only one thing of them, and that is, That they would but make tryal of it for a while. For my Charity prompts me to believe that all the Zeal that some express against the *Common Prayer*, and all that indifferency that is in others for it, proceeds only from their ignorance of what it is, or at least from their want of an experimental knowledg of it. For let any Man that seriously minds the Worship of God and the Salvation of his Soul before all things else, let such a one, I say, set himself in good earnest to use the *Common Prayer* as he ought to do for some considerable time, and I do not doubt but that by the blessing of God, he will find that benefit and edification by it, that his own experience shall convince him of all that I have now said, more than all the Arguments that I have, or any man in the World can ever produce to him. Some perhaps may think this to be a Paradox: But I do not question but that many here present can attest it upon their own knowledg: Having found themselves

selves more confirmed in their Faith, more settled in their Religion, more humbled for their sins, more supported under their troubles, more inflamed with Love to God and desires of Heaven, every way more *Edifyed* by the constant use of the *Common Prayer*, than they could ever have believed it possible to have been, except they had found it to be so by their own experience.

Now these things being thus briefly considered, I shall observe only two things from them. The first is the extraordinary prudence as well as piety of our first Reformers, who first compiled the Book of *Common Prayer*, so exactly Conformable to the Word of God and that Apostolical Canon in my Text; which I cannot but ascribe to the same extraordinary aid and assistance from God, whereby they were afterwards enabled to suffer persecution, yea Martyrdome it self for his sake, and so to confirm what they have done with their own Blood, which certainly is no small commendation of it.

The other thing I would observe unto you, is the reason, why the Devil hath had such a spight against the *Common Prayer*, ever since it was first made. For the more *edifying* it is to Gods People, the more destructive it must needs be of the Devils Kingdom. And therefore it is no wonder that he hath all along employed the utmost of his power and policy to blast its Reputation, and so to discourage and dissuade Men from the use of it. And by the permission of God for the punishment of this ungrateful Nation, he hath so far prevailed in his design, that the Liturgy hath been twice cast out of the Church, since it was first brought into it, once in the Reign of Queen *Mary*, and then again in the days of King *Charles* the first.

In the Reign of Queen *Mary*, you all know, who were his Instruments in the doing of it, even the *Papists*. For they clearly and truly fore-saw, that their Erroneous O-

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pinions could never be believed, nor their ſuperſtitious Practices obſerved in the Nation, ſo long as the *Common Prayer* was uſed. Foraſmuch as there is nothing in that but what is ſound and agreeable to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and ſo contrary to the groundleſs Opinions which the Church of *Rome* would obtrude upon the World for Articles of Faith. And beſides that, there are many expreſſions purpoſely inſerted in it, to arm us againſt the Popes Supremacy, Indulgences, Invocation of Saints, Tranſubſtantiation, and other Popiſh Errors. So that it would have been impoſſible for the Romiſh Religion to be ever reſtored in the Nation, unleſs the *Common Prayer* was firſt removed. Which therefore they took care to have done as ſoon as poſſible. But within a few years after, even the firſt of Queen *Elizabeth*, it was brought in again. And as the Reformation was begun before, ſo from that time forward it was carried on and perfected, chiefly by means of the *Common Prayer*. For it is very obſervable that in the Reign of King *Edward* the Sixth, and for ſeveral years too of Queen *Elizabeth*, there was little or no preaching in moſt parts of the Kingdom, and few then could read Engliſh, and yet by the conſtant and general uſe of the Liturgy, and Gods Bleſſing upon it, the whole Nation was ſo edified in the True Religion, that there was ſcarce one in an hundred but forſook and abhorred all Popiſh Doctrines and Superſtitions: Which is an undeniable Argument, that in this reſpect alſo it is as *edifying*, as it is poſſible for a thing of that nature to be. In ſo much that ſo long as the *Common Prayer* is uſed and frequented as it ought to be, it is morally impoſſible for Popery to get any ground amongſt us. But if this Bulwark was once removed (which God forbid) our grand Adverſary would ſoon accompliſh his malicious deſigns upon us, one way or other.

This he knows well enough; and therefore hath left no ſtone unturned to effect it. But what he had done

before by the Papiſts, he afterwards brought about again by other means in the Reign of King *Charles* the Firſt. For by what kind of Spirit the *Common Prayer* was then caſt out, you all know, and ſome of you found by woful experience. All that I ſhall ſay of it, is only this, That the ſame Spirit that then ſtirred up people ſo violently againſt the *Common Prayer*, ſtirr'd them up at the ſame time to Rebel againſt their King, to take away Mens Eſtates and Lives, contrary to all Law and Juſtice; and at laſt to Murther one of the moſt pious Princes that ever lived. And whether that was the Spirit of Chriſt or Antichriſt, God or the Devil, judge you. Be ſure the conſequents of its being laid aſide at that time were very ſad. For people being deprived of that whereby they ſhould have been *edified*, were immediately toſſed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine, until at length many of them fell into the moſt pernicious and damnable Hereſies that were ever heard of in the Church. Yea together with the Liturgy, they laid aſide all diſtinction betwixt ſacred and common things; by which means the whole Nation was in danger of being over-ſpread with Profaneneſs and Irreligion.

But bleſſed be the Name of the moſt high God for it, he was once more pleaſed to appear for us; and in a miraculous manner to reſtore our *Common Prayer* to his Church, together with our Gracious Soveraign to his Kingdoms. But what ſhall we render to the Lord for ſo great a Bleſſing as this is? All that he expects, or we can give him for it, is only to make the beſt uſe of it that we can. This therefore is that which I now pray and beſeech you all for the future to do. Do not think it enough to be for the *Common Prayer*, and to come now and then to hear it. This you may do, as many do, and yet receive no more benefit by it, than as if there was none at all to be received. Which therefore can by no means be imputed to the *Common Prayer* its ſelf, but

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to the negligence of those that use it. Neither must you think it enough to talk high for it, or to rail at those who are not so happy as to be rightly informed about it. But rather take all opportunities to inform them, and by all means possible to convince them of the Excellency and Usefulness of it. Which you can never do so effectually, as by your out-stripping and exceeding them in Vertue and Good Works. For this is and ever will be a plain Demonstration, that the *Common Prayer* is indeed far more *edifying*, than those new Modes of Religion, which they are so unhappily seduced into. That therefore you may do this, and so both experience in your selves, and demonstrate unto others, the truth and certainty of what you have now heard, concerning the *Common Prayer*, I desire you to observe these few Rules in the using of it.

First, Come not to our *Publick Prayer* only out of Custom or for Fashion sake, as the manner of some is, but out of a sincere obedience to Gods Commands, and with a sure trust and confidence in his Promises for his Blessing upon what you do. For which end it will be very good as you go to Church, to bethink your selves whither you are going, and what you are to do there, that so laying aside all other business, you may put your selves into a right temper for so great a Work.

Secondly, Frequent our *Publick Prayers* as often as conveniently you can. The oftner you are at them, the better you will like them, and the more edified you will be by them. And therefore do not satisfie your selves with hearing them once a Week. In this City, as also in many other places of the Kingdom, especially where there are Cathedrals, or Collegiate Churches, you may enjoy the benefit of them publickly every day, and so keep your hearts continually in an holy and heavenly

ame, and always live as becometh Chriſtians: And if you neglect ſuch opportunities as are now put into your hands, you will one day wiſh you had not; but then wiſhing will do no good.

Thirdly, If poſſible, come always at the beginning of *Divine Service*. Otherwiſe you will certainly miſs of ſomething that would have been edifying to you, and perhaps of that, which at that time might have done you more good than all the reſt. Neither will you loſe the benefit onely of part of it, but in ſome meaſure of the whole too. All the parts of it being linked together in ſo excellent a manner and method, that they influence and aſſiſt each other. So that nothing can be omitted either by Miniſter or People, but the whole will ſuffer by it, and loſe ſomething of that Vertue and Efficacy, which otherwiſe you would find in it.

Fourthly, All the while that you are in Gods Houſe, carry your ſelves as in his ſpecial preſence, and ſuitably to the work you are about; ſtanding while you praiſe God, and kneeling while you pray unto him, as our Church hath directed you. For though theſe may ſeem but little things in themſelves, yet they are of great conſequence, both to our Worſhipping of God aright, and alſo to our being edified by what we do, as I have ſhewed before.

Laſtly, Take ſpecial care all along to keep your minds in entire upon the matter in hand. When you confeſs your ſins to God, do it with an hearty and ſincere Repentance for all the Errors of your life paſt. When the Abſolution is pronounced, receive it with a firm and ſtedfaſt Faith in Chriſt your Saviour. When you repeat or ſing thy Hymns and Pſalms, raiſe up your Spirits as high as you can to joyn with thoſe above in praiſing and magnifying

nifying the Eternal God. When the Word of God is read, hearken diligently unto it, and conſider ſeriouſly what he that made you ſaith to you, and requireth of you, and reſolve by his Bleſſing to believe and live accordingly. And all the while that you are upon your knees, putting up your Petitions to the moſt high God, let your whole Souls be employed in it, earneſtly deſiring the good things you pray for at his gracious hands, and humbly confiding on his faithful promiſes for the granting of them. By this means you will perform reaſonable ſervice unto God, and by conſequence that which will be very acceptable unto him, and as profitable and edifying to your ſelves. Whereas they that do not obſerve this Rule, cannot be properly ſaid to pray, or ſerve God at all. And therefore it is no wonder that they come to Church, and hear the *Common Prayer* read, and yet are no way edified by it. Indeed it is impoſſible that they ſhould. For as much as all the benefit and edification that we can poſſibly receive from any of our Devotions, depends very much upon the due intention of our minds in the performance of them. To which, as I have ſhewn, both a Form of Prayer in general, and ours in particular, is a very great help.

Do but obſerve theſe plain and neceſſary Rules in uſing of the *Common Prayer* (without which you cannot be truly ſaid to uſe, but rather to abuſe it) and you will ſoon find what I have ſaid about it to be true, even that *All things in it are done to Edifying.* And therefore I would to God that not only you that hear me at this time, but all the people of the Nation could be once perſwaded to do ſo. What an Holy Nation, what a peculiar People ſhould we then become? How pious towards God? How Loyal to our Soveraign? How Juſt and Charitable to one another? For by our conſtant Worſhipping Almighty God in ſo ſolemn and devout a manner as

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this is, our hearts would be over-awed with ſo great a fear of his Divine Majeſty, that we ſhould never dare willingly to offend him. Our minds would be filled and impregnated with ſuch a ſenſe of his power and ſoveraignty, that we ſhould honour and revere it in thoſe alſo whom he hath ſet over us. Our whole Souls would be raiſed up ſo much above the World, that we ſhould not do an ill act to gain it wholly to our ſelves. In ſhort, we ſhould be every day *edified* more and more in Faith, in Love, in Humility, in Self-denial, in Temperance, in Patience, in all true Grace and Vertue; And ſo we ſhould go from ſtrength to ſtrength, from one degree of grace unto another, until at length we arrive at Glory and Perfection in the higheſt Heavens, where we ſhall ſpend Eternity its ſelf in Praiſing and Adoring the moſt high God; as for all the other Mercies which he hath vouchſafed to us, ſo in a particular manner for our being Members of ſuch an Apoſtolical Church, wherein *all things are done to edifying.*

Which God of his Infinite Mercy garnt we may all do in and through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with the Father and Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory, World without end. *Amen.*

FINIS.